

John Joyner Smith House
400 Wilmington and Bay Streets
Beaufort
Beaufort County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-291

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

HABS S.C.
7-Beaufort
12

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. SC-291

JOHN JOYNER SMITH HOUSE

Address: 400 Wilmington and Bay Streets, Beaufort, Beaufort County, South Carolina.

Present Owner and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Angus D. Fordham, 400 Wilmington Street, Beaufort, South Carolina.

Present Use: Residential.

Brief Statement of Significance: A mid-nineteenth century mansion with attractive architectural features.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Original and Subsequent Owners: John Joyner Smith. Many owners and tenants, including McLeod. Now Mr. and Mrs. Angus D. Fordham.
- B. Date of Erection: About 1850.
- C. Historical Events and Persons Associated with Building: Occupied by U. S. Army officers during Civil War.
- D. Sources of Information: Data furnished by Mr. and Mrs. Howard E. Danner, Beaufort, South Carolina.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement
 - 1. Architectural character: An antebellum mansion with spacious interiors, piazza, and notable decorative features.
 - 2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.
- B. Technical description of exterior
 - 1. Number of stories, over-all dimensions, layout, shape: two stories, over high basement; about 46' x 58', including piazza; T-shaped with piazza on three sides, small rear wing.
 - 2. Foundations: Stucco, high.

3. Wall construction: Frame, clapboards, with 5" exposure, painted white. One corner board, apparently original, is paneled.
4. Porches, stoops: Five-bay piazza over high basement, and bays turning corners, tall Greek Doric columns, stucco on brick, plain, with second-floor balcony supported at mid height. Upper ceiling paneled; joists are exposed at lower ceiling. Marble stoop at main entrance on east side; single flight marble steps with nosing, wrought-iron rail.
5. Chimneys: Two interior chimneys, stuccoed above roof, with flat hoods.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Entrance, at east side. Within a rectangular opening with reeded trim (corner blocks) are set two Greek Ionic columns coupled to two half-columns, side lights being between. The entablature, which breaks back over the single door, forms a transom bar, above which is glazing bordered by carved egg-and-dart molding. At the main-floor level, on center of the piazza, is a false door motif, in painted wood paneling, resembling a single door with side lights. There are reeded pilasters, a guilloche band in a narrow architrave, a larger guilloche in the frieze, and a star-shaped leafy ornament in a block over each pilaster. The cornice is intricately shaped in plan, with breaks and scallops; it has a delicate guilloche band in the soffit.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows are triple, the central opening being widest; reeded trim with corner blocks. Double-hung sash, nine-over-nine lights in center, three-over-three lights in sides. Louvered blinds. First-floor windows have hinged panel below, opening to piazza.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Hip roof, composition shingles.
 - b. Cornice: Same as cornice of piazza. A delicate wooden cornice completes the piazza and extends around the house. The soffit contains modillions; the bed moldings include a row of acanthus leaves; and at the top and bottom of the frieze are rows of guttae.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: First floor--side hall with stair, dining room behind; two parlors across south front opening onto piazza. Approximately 12' ceiling. Second floor--central hall, one main room each side at south front, two smaller rooms each side at rear. 11' ceiling.
2. Stairways: Relatively modern, open string, 22 risers. Rear service stair in rear wing.
3. Flooring: First-growth yellow pine boards, 4 1/2" to 7" wide, natural color.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Typically plaster, painted.
5. Doors: Typically with six molded panels; double sliding doors between parlors.
6. Decorative features and trim: Typical wood door trim is pilaster type with corner blocks; window trim is similar but with acanthus-leaf ornament in corner blocks, which is also found in blocks over mullions. Room bases are of wood, molded with "attic" type base over high plinth. Treatment of the two parlors is identical; each is about 17' x 21' in plan. A projecting chimney breast is centered on the north (interior) wall; on the south wall, off-center, is a triple window. Between the two rooms is a large opening with sliding doors, and on the outer end wall is a triple window. Window mullions are similar to the trim around the opening. Reveals are splayed, extending to the floor, and paneled; soffits are paneled. There is a hinged panel below the stool. Mantelpieces are large, of black marble with nearly free-standing Ionic columns, over which the entablature breaks out. The mantel shelf is straight, but the frieze and architrave bulge outward at the center. The frieze is pulvinated and contains a paneled center block. A single stone forms the hearth. The door trim in these parlors has acanthus leaves in the corner blocks. The plaster room cornice has a lower band of upright acanthus leaves, plain moldings, a band of smaller acanthus leaves, a band of oak leaves and acorns in the soffit, and at the top a small band of acanthus leaves. Each parlor has a plaster centerpiece in the ceiling. Seven acanthus leaves radiate from a center. A foliated stalk is located on each axis between leaves; each of the seven bears an anthemion on axis and a foliated scroll with rose blossoms on each side, thus forming an outer band to terminate the whole centerpiece.

The plaster cornices and centerpieces in these parlors combine conventional motifs (acanthus, anthemion) with naturalistic motifs (oak leaves and acorns, rose leaves and blossoms). The relief is fairly high, with some undercutting.

The stair hall, at both floor levels, has a plaster cornice with a single row of acanthus leaves.

Trim in the dining room is generally typical of that outside the parlors; openings have reeded pilaster trim and corner blocks with a round molded panel. The mantel is of wood, with pilasters and straight entablature.

Trim on the second floor is similar except that mantels in the south rooms have Doric columns.

Rooms not described otherwise have molded plaster cornices.

7. Hardware: Doors hung on two butts, typically; mortise locks, some box locks.

8. Heating: A fireplace in each major room.

D. Site

1. Orientation and general setting: A corner lot. Blocks are small. Residential street. This house faces south toward the water.

2. Enclosures: Enclosed yard on south; wood picket fence with pedestals.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
August 1963

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Addendum to:

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